**Brief Summary and Reflection**

The brief “Considerations for Black Children and Youth in the Era of COVID-19” offers why black Americans are disproportionately affected by COVID, the specific impact on youth, and policy changes to respond to these concerns. The piece explains that the high rates of COVID-19 infections and death in the black community is attributed to pre-existing systematic racism and inadequate health care infrastructures. Black communities, and consequently black children, are more likely to be exposed COVID death, have increased rates of stress/depression/anxiety due lack of resources or discrimination, utilize public transport, live in low income neighborhoods with underfunded schools, not have health insurance, and ect. As a result, amidst COVID-19 black children are more likely to be exposed to COVID, not have access to technology and remote resources, and have negative, traumatic life experiences while navigating schooling.

The brief presents policy changes that support black youth throughout this time. The article highlights the importance of educational reform and funding. It is vital to meet students’ basic needs of housing, emotional support, safety, food and healthcare in addition to providing an nurturing space. These two approaches are presented through a variety of educational policies including the extension of free meal programs during school closures to increased funding for teacher training in remote and asynchronous teaching for minority populations.

The brief was a powerful testament to the pain that the black community is currently experiencing. The brief did not surprise me because the suffering of our black community is a continuous, systematic issue. Years of white supremacy and racism in our economic, educational, and legal systems preceded the high rates of COVID-19, allowing waves black death, or black murder, to be inevitable during this pandemic. Though this article didn’t surprise me, the statistics were difficult to read. In particular, the elevated rates of stress in black youth due to increased exposure to death made me want to cry. The idea that death is commonplace in one community, but unthinkable in my own is disgusting. Reading the brief, it struck me that this is what privilege looks like. Though I am grateful that all of my loved ones are safe and healthy, I am furious about the heavy, continuous grief plaguing our black communities.

**Course Content Connections**

The brief offered several connections to the course. Throughout the course, we highlighted the importance of structure and nurture in order to promote pro-social skills and positive behaviors; however, these theories fail to mention that it is impossible for structure and nurture to be effective if the child is starving. If a child is not safe, fed, and happy they cannot properly develop and respond to positive nurture and structure. An example of this is Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory which encourages educators and parents to scaffold or provide guidance a little above the child’s cognitive ability. The child is already too challenged with their own well-being to be concerned or have the capacity for these learning spaces. Another connection proposed is attachment theory. Several of the policy changes suggested in the brief surround allowing key role models in children’s life like educators to be more consistent, loving, and informed providers. Secure attachment is cultivated when a caretaker is appropriately responsive and present during early childhood development, allowing them to believe in their own self-worth in the future. In schools secure attachment can be encouraged through teacher trainings on culture, bias, and remote learning. Through utilizing attachment theory, a component of the cyclical process of white supremacy and racism can be dismantled. Finally, the brief provides policies on every level of prevention. An example of a primary prevention is the policy increasing funding to educate teachers how to not do harm in their classrooms remotely. A secondary intervention is showcased in equipping teachers with grief training because it is known that black youth are at higher risk of exposure to death or disease. These examples continue, revealing the importance of a multi-pronged approach to prevention and dismantling systematic racism.

**Risk and Protective Factors for this Population**

Though black communities are at great risk for many negative experiences, they have strength and resilience. Black youth and children have risk factors such as racism, food insecurity and exposure to violence. Despite these risk factors, the brief offers protective factors that help these youth thrive. Examples of these protective can be strong social support systems, stable housing, and positive attitudes. It’s vital to recognize that each youth will have differing sets of risk and protective factors in accordance to their lived experience. All youth are at risk of negative behavior and experiences; however, some youth have protective factors such as the characteristics discussed above to be resilient in the face of that risk. Consequently, in order to develop resiliency, we should target risk factors in addition to promoting and building on protective factors. An example of building resilience is fostering a strong social support system through mentors, therapists, and teachers which allows black youth to overcome the risk of depression and anxiety from exposure to death and disease.

**Conclusion and Application**

The knowledge offered in this brief is invaluable and deeply applicable to my future. At my heart, I am an activist and I hope to continue to work towards dismantling systems of oppression. I want to be a Neuropsychologist and primarily serve black and brown women and children. This brief provided me insight about black youth’s lived experiences. As I work with black youth who undergo neurodegeneration, I understand the importance of ensuring they have their basic needs such as transport, food, safety, and health prior to my work. Another example of this piece’s importance lies in the discussion of training. The brief emphasized the power of informed, accessible care. As I do my work, I will be sure to do implicit bias, remote provider, and cultural competency training before I work with vulnerable populations like black youth.